



Farm Labor

Hired Workers Down 5 Percent, Wage Rates up 4 Percent From a Year Ago

There were 1.19 million hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches the week of October 6-12, 2002, down 5 percent from a year ago. There were 935 thousand workers hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 250 thousand workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage rate of \$8.93 per hour during the October 2002 survey week, up 34 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$8.30 per hour, up 29 cents from last October. Livestock workers earned \$8.44 per hour compared with \$8.39 a year earlier. The Field and Livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$8.33 was up 24 cents from last year.

The number of hours worked averaged 40.4 hours for hired workers during the survey week compared with 41.7 hours a year ago.

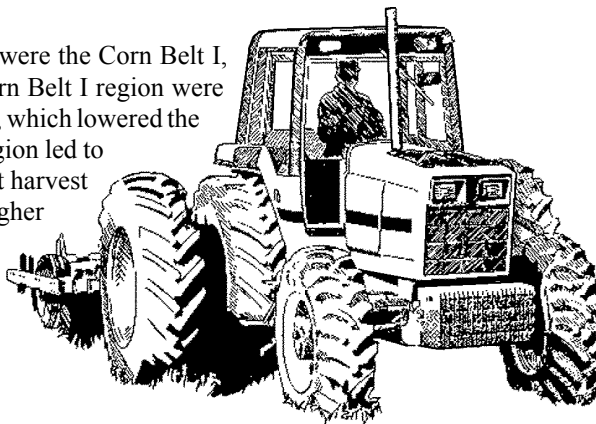
The largest decreases in number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri), Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana and Ohio), Pacific (Oregon and Washington), Lake (Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin) and Southern Plains (Texas and Oklahoma) regions. Over much of the Corn Belt, summer drought conditions and untimely rains impacted crop development and fall harvest. Corn Belt producers were just getting fall harvest underway during the survey week and hired fewer workers for longer hours. Cold temperatures in the Pacific region slowed the apple and grape harvests, curtailing the need for field laborers. Rain and wet soils in the eastern Lake region and most of the Southern Plains delayed harvest of most field crops, necessitating fewer workers.

The largest increases in number of hired farm workers over last year occurred in the Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia) region, Florida and the Mountain I (Idaho, Montana and Wyoming) region. In the Appalachian II region, more workers were employed by nurseries and greenhouses as they geared up for the holidays, and fruit harvest was in full swing in the eastern part of the region. In Florida, citrus fruit harvest was accelerating, causing the need for more workers. In the Mountain I region, harvested acres were up for most field crops, which led to an increased need for workers to complete harvest, and conditions were ideal for most of the reference week.

Hired farm worker wage rates were above a year ago in 12 of the 18 regions. ***The largest increases occurred in the Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania),*** California, Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada and Utah), Northern Plains (Kansas, Nebraska, North and South Dakota) and Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi) regions.

The higher wage rates in the Northeast II region were attributed to more salaried workers working fewer hours and a higher percentage of nursery workers. California's wage rate increased due to the normal seasonal shift to more full-time, higher paid employees. In the Mountain II region, winter wheat planting and fall crop harvest were nearly complete, decreasing the need for seasonal, lower paid workers. In the Northern Plains, farming operations continue to hire and maintain experienced, full-time workers. Wet conditions in the Delta led to fewer hours worked, thus increasing the average hourly wage for salaried workers. There was also a higher percentage of catfish workers in Mississippi.

Regions showing the largest declines in the hired farm worker wage rates were the Corn Belt I, Southern Plains and Pacific regions. Declining hired wage rates in the Corn Belt I region were attributed to salaried employees that worked more hours during grain harvest, which lowered the average hourly rate. Calving and lambing seasons in the Southern Plains region led to more hours worked for salaried employees, lowering the hourly wage. Fruit harvest in the Pacific region was hampered by sub-freezing temperatures. Fewer higher paid fruit pickers lowered the overall average wage rate for the region.



Hired Workers: Number and Hours Worked by Region and United States, October 6-12, 2002 1/

U.S. and Region 2/	Hired			
	Number of Workers	Expected to be Employed		Number of Hours Worked
		150 Days or More	149 Days or Less	
:	:	----- 1,000 -----	:	Hours per Week
Northeast I	: 50	36	14	41.2
Northeast II	: 41	34	7	36.4
Appalachian I	: 42	25	17	33.1
Appalachian II	: 36	17	19	30.3
Southeast	: 33	21	12	36.4
FL	: 57	51	6	38.9
Lake	: 64	41	23	34.7
Cornbelt I	: 42	25	17	38.7
Cornbelt II	: 25	13	12	34.7
Delta	: 38	29	9	38.9
Northern Plains	: 34	25	9	43.8
Southern Plains	: 58	46	12	41.7
Mountain I	: 30	21	9	45.1
Mountain II	: 16	10	6	35.7
Mountain III	: 19	16	3	45.7
Pacific	: 77	46	31	39.2
CA	: 265	218	47	45.5
HI	: 8	7	1	37.9
US 3/	: 935	681	254	40.4

1/ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

2/ *Regions on page 3.

3/ Excludes AK.

Hired Workers: Wage Rates for Type of Workers and All Hired Workers by Region and United States, October 6-12, 2002 1/

U.S. and Region	Type of Worker			Wage Rates for All Hired Workers
	Field	Livestock	Field & Lvsk Combined	
:	:	:	:	Dollars per Hour
Northeast I	: 9.16	7.70	8.76	9.36
Northeast II	: 8.61	8.17	8.51	9.29
Appalachian I	: 7.57	8.00	7.70	8.21
Appalachian II	: 7.13	7.46	7.21	7.50
Southeast	: 7.30	8.25	7.56	8.18
FL	: 7.50	8.60	7.72	8.67
Lake	: 9.28	9.11	9.21	9.73
Cornbelt I	: 8.49	8.89	8.54	8.90
Cornbelt II	: 8.69	8.30	8.59	8.81
Delta	: 7.12	7.72	7.27	7.77
Northern Plains	: 9.01	9.03	9.02	9.32
Southern Plains	: 7.05	7.32	7.18	7.57
Mountain I	: 7.84	7.95	7.89	8.13
Mountain II	: 8.31	8.79	8.50	8.79
Mountain III	: 7.07	8.24	7.42	8.25
Pacific	: 8.91	9.36	8.99	9.47
CA	: 8.51	9.42	8.62	9.35
HI 4/	: 9.25	:	9.32	11.02
US 3/	: 8.30	8.44	8.33	8.93

1/ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

2/ *Regions.

3/ Excludes AK.

4/ Insufficient data for livestock.

*Region	States
Northeast I	CT, ME, MA, NH, NY, RI, VT.
Northeast II	DE, MD, NJ, PA.
Appalachian I	NC, VA.
Appalachian II	KY, TN, WV.
Southeast	AL, GA, SC.
Lake	MI, MN, WI.
Cornbelt I	IL, IN, OH.
Cornbelt II	IA, MO.
Delta	AR, LA, MS.
Northern Plains	KS, NE, ND, SD.
Southern Plains	OK, TX.
Mountain I	ID, MT, WY.
Mountain II	CO, NV, UT.
Mountain III	AZ, NM.
Pacific	OR, WA.

**Field and Livestock Workers Combined: Wage Rates,
by Type of Farm, by Region and 48 States 1/**

Region	October 7-13, 2001				October 6-12, 2002			
	Field Crops	Other Crops	Lvsk & Poultry	All Farms	Field Crops	Other Crops	Lvsk & Poultry	All Farms
	Dollars per Hour							
Northeast	6.67	8.06	7.03	7.63	3/	8.89	8.19	8.66
Appalachian	6.94	7.67	7.96	7.59	7.20	8.10	8.04	7.48
Southeast	6.88	7.64	8.10	7.67	7.74	7.35	8.60	7.66
Lake	3/	8.64	8.71	8.97	8.61	9.27	9.14	9.21
Cornbelt	8.60	8.77	8.86	8.74	8.77	8.20	8.45	8.56
Delta	6.83	6.74	7.44	6.91	6.77	7.64	8.02	7.27
Northern Plains	7.70	3/	8.44	8.40	9.01	9.25	8.90	9.02
Southern Plains	6.82	6.98	7.98	7.52	6.72	7.40	7.17	7.18
Mountain	7.13	7.24	7.71	7.44	8.32	7.85	7.83	7.89
Pacific	8.19	8.26	9.63	8.37	8.14	8.59	9.30	8.69
48 States	7.82	8.08	8.23	8.08	7.95	8.41	8.43	8.33

All Hired Workers: Wage Rates, by Economic Class of Farm by Region and 48 States 1/

Region 2/	October 7-13, 2001					October 6-12, 2002				
	Gross Value Sales-\$1,000's				All Farms	Gross Value Sales-\$1,000's				All Farms
	< 50	50-99	100-249	250 +		< 50	50-99	100-249	250 +	
:	Dollars per Hour									
:										
N. East	8.40	7.63	7.66	8.57	8.38	8.09	7.85	8.52	9.79	9.33
Appal.	7.54	6.90	7.09	8.36	7.96	7.70	6.01	7.83	8.74	7.90
S. East	8.22	3/	7.95	8.70	8.53	8.20	3/	8.16	8.54	8.50
Lake	3/	7.92	7.75	9.70	9.21	9.53	8.01	9.48	9.83	9.73
Cornbelt	7.82	7.68	8.81	9.62	9.23	7.91	9.18	8.59	9.01	8.87
Delta	3/	6.81	6.72	7.15	7.13	7.37	6.98	7.50	8.19	7.77
N. Plains	8.34	6.81	7.77	9.28	8.68	8.20	3/	9.15	9.40	9.32
S. Plains	8.58	7.46	8.08	7.91	8.01	3/	8.17	7.03	8.23	7.57
Mountain	8.05	7.06	8.36	7.85	7.87	9.27	7.92	8.68	8.09	8.30
Pacific	7.65	10.23	8.80	8.97	8.85	8.89	8.70	8.94	9.46	9.37
48 States	8.02	8.31	8.01	8.80	8.56	7.93	8.28	8.40	9.22	8.92

1/ Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

2/ Regions consist of the following States:

Northeast: CT, DE, MD, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT.

Appalachian: KY, NC, TN, VA, WV.

Southeast: AL, FL, GA, SC.

Lake: MI, MN, WI.

Cornbelt: IA, IL, IN, MO, OH.

Delta: AR, LA, MS.

Northern Plains: KS, NE, ND, SD.

Southern Plains: OK, TX.

Mountain: AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, UT, WY.

Pacific: CA, OR, WA.

48 States: All States, excluding AK and HI.

3/ Insufficient data.

Agricultural Prices

The preliminary All Farm Products Index of Prices Received by Farmers in November is 97, based on 1990-92=100, up 1 point (1.0 percent) from the October index. Higher prices for soybeans, eggs, cattle, and tomatoes more than offset lower prices for hogs, milk, lettuce, and corn. The seasonal change in the mix of commodities farmers sell also affects the overall index. Increased marketings of cotton, milk, cattle, and cottonseed offset decreased marketings of soybeans, peanuts, potatoes, and sunflower.

The preliminary All Farm Products Index is 4 points (4.3 percent) above November, 2001. Higher prices for corn, soybeans, wheat, and cattle more than offset lower prices for broilers, hogs, turkeys, and calves.

The Food Commodities Index increased 2 points (2.1 percent) above last month to 96, but is 1.0 percent below November last year.

The November Index of Prices Paid for Commodities and Services, Interest, Taxes, and Farm Wage Rates (PPITW) is 126 percent of the 1990-92 average. The index is up 1 point (0.8 percent) from October and 4 points (3.3 percent) above November 2001. Higher prices in November for feeder pigs, feeder cattle, feed supplements, and nitrogen fertilizers more than offset lower prices for feed concentrates, diesel fuel, herbicides, and self-propelled machinery.

Average Prices Received by Farmers: United States

Item	Entire Month		Preliminary
	Nov 2001	Oct 2002	Nov 2002
----- Dollars -----			
Field Crops			
Barley, per bushel	2.30	2.65	2.81
Hay, all, baled, per ton 1/	95.90	94.50	93.60
Soybeans, per bushel	4.16	5.19	5.43
Fruit, fresh			
Apples, per lb	.235	.301	.268
Strawberries, per lb	.964	.684	1.08
Vegetables, fresh			
Corn, Sweet, per cwt	24.80	18.20	17.00
Lettuce, per cwt	10.90	13.30	11.20
Tomatoes, per cwt	28.50	28.70	39.10
Livestock and Livestock Products			
Beef Cattle, per cwt	64.00	64.70	66.50
Steers and Heifers, per cwt	67.80	68.50	70.90
Cows, per cwt	35.80	33.60	32.60
Calves, per cwt	96.70	91.90	90.40
Broilers, live, per lb	.390	.280	.290
Eggs, all, per dozen	.641	.540	.720
Milk, all, per cwt 2/	14.40	12.10	11.70

1/ Mid-month

2/ Before deductions for hauling and government withholdings. Includes bulk tank, quantity, and other premiums. Excludes hauling subsidies.